

**Draft Environmental Impact Statement for
Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment
for the South Atlantic Region
*Frequently Asked Questions June 2011***

What is the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit (ACL) Amendment?

- A DEIS is a draft analysis of potential significant impacts that proposed management actions can have on the natural and social environment. The analysis compares a series of alternatives for each action to evaluate the effects on the environment.
- The Comprehensive ACL Amendment would establish ACLs and accountability measures (AMs) for species in the Snapper-Grouper, Dolphin-Wahoo, and Golden Crab Fishery Management Plans (FMP) not subject to overfishing.
 - An ACL is the level of annual catch of a stock or stock complex that if met or exceeded triggers some corrective action, such as a seasonal closure or a quota closure. ACLs are set at levels that prevent overfishing from occurring.
 - AMs are management controls to prevent ACLs from being exceeded, and to correct overages of ACLs if they occur. For example, if an ACL for a species is exceeded, the ACL in the following season would be reduced by the amount of the overage.
- The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires all federally managed fisheries be managed with ACLs and AMs by the end of 2011.
- [Amendments 17A](#) and [17B](#) to the Snapper-Grouper FMP specified ACLs for species subject to overfishing.
- In addition to establishing ACLs and AMs, the Comprehensive ACL Amendment would:
 - Remove some species from the snapper-grouper fishery management unit;

Snappers	Groupers	Jacks	Grunts	Porgies	Triggerfish	Sea basses	Tilefishes	Wrasses
Blackfin	Coney	Bar	Black margate	Grass	Ocean	Bank	Sand	Hogfish
Black	Graysby	Crevalle	Blue-striped	Jolthead	Queen	Rock		Puddingwife
Dog	Misty	Yellow	Cottonwick	Knobbed				
Mahogany	Tiger		French	Longspine				
Queen	Yellowfin		Margate	Saucereye				
Schoolmaster	Yellowmouth		Porkfish	Scup				
			Sailors choice	Sheepshead				
			Smallmouth	Whitebone				
			Spanish					
			Tomtate					

- Develop new species groups for remaining species in the snapper-grouper fishery management unit. Single species (individual) ACLs would be established for assessed and targeted species, and species where ACL=0. Complexes for groups of species would be established for other species using associations based on life history, catch statistics from commercial logbook and observer data, recreational headboat logbook and private/charter survey, and fishery-independent data. When a complex ACL is exceeded, all species in that complex would be subject to AMs. When an individual ACL is exceeded, the individual stock, and in some cases, other species that are closely associated with it, would be subject to AMs;

Deep-Water Grouper & Tilefish Complex	Individual ACLs
Yellowedge grouper	Atlantic spadefish
Blueline tilefish	Greater amberjack
Silk Snapper	Blue runner
Jacks Complex	Gray triggerfish
Almaco jack	Snowy grouper
Banded rudderfish	Golden tilefish
Lesser amberjack	Warsaw grouper
Snappers Complex	Wreckfish
Gray snapper	Scamp
Lane snapper	Gag
Cubera snapper	Red grouper
Hinds & Grunts Complex	Goliath grouper
Red hind	Nassau grouper
Rock hind	Black sea bass
White grunt	Black grouper
	Speckled hind
	Red porgy
	Hogfish
	Yellowtail snapper
	Red snapper
	Vermilion snapper
	Mutton snapper

- Specify an acceptable biological catch (ABC) for species in the snapper-grouper, dolphin-wahoo, golden crab, and Sargassum FMPs. ABC is the level of a stock or stock complex's annual catch that accounts for scientific uncertainty, such as variability or gaps in data;
- Specify annual catch targets (ACTs). ACTs are annual catch levels specified below the ACLs. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) may choose an ACT to account for management uncertainty, such as compliance rates;
- Establish allocations: Jurisdictional (between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico) for mutton snapper and yellowtail snapper, and Sector (commercial and recreational) for snapper-grouper and dolphin-wahoo species.
- Management measures for wreckfish, dolphin, and wahoo, such as size limits, and prohibiting sale of fish caught under the recreational bag limit.

Who will be affected by the Comprehensive ACL Amendment?

- Commercial and recreational fishers who fish for snapper-grouper species and golden crab in South Atlantic federal waters (3-200 miles offshore), off North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The actions in this amendment would also apply to commercial and recreational fishers who target dolphin and wahoo, from Maine to Florida, along the Atlantic coast.

When will the Comprehensive ACL Amendment be effective?

- The Council is expected to approve the amendment in August 2011, with actions effective by the end of 2011.

How can I comment on the DEIS for the Comprehensive ACL Amendment?

- NOAA Fisheries Service is accepting comments on the DEIS for the Comprehensive ACL Amendment from June 17, 2011 to August 1, 2011.
- Comments can be submitted electronically via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. After selecting “submit a comment,” enter the following docket number into the “Search” box: NOAA-NMFS-2011-0087.

Will there be more public comment opportunities for the Comprehensive ACL Amendment?

- Yes, there will be two additional opportunities, when the notice of availability publishes for the Amendment and the related Proposed Rule.

Where can I get more information on actions in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment?

- The Comprehensive ACL Amendment may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Service Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SASnapperGrouperHomepage.htm> and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>.
- For more information, contact Nikhil Mehta at (727) 824-5305.